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**FEDERAL AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCE
NEW VIOLENT CRIME INITIATIVE**

Baltimore, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, and Theresa R. Stoop, the Special Agent in Charge of the Baltimore office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), announced today that Baltimore is one of 15 cities in the United States that will be the focus of a new program to combat violent crime announced earlier today by Attorney General John Ashcroft. Under that program, the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Maryland and the ATF have created a multi-agency "Violent Crime Impact Team" to target the most violent offenders in the Baltimore City area.

The Violent Crime Impact Team is comprised of prosecutors from the United States Attorney's Office and the State's Attorney's Office for Baltimore City, agents from the ATF, and detectives from the Baltimore City Police Department, with assistance from the U.S. Marshals Service.

The goal of the Violent Crime Impact Team program, which is based largely on the success of Project Safe Neighborhoods, is to reduce violent crime by targeting the most violent offenders in Baltimore City. The Violent Crime Impact Team has been working for the past several weeks

to identify the most persistent violent offenders in the city, recognize patterns and trends in their areas and devise strategies for proactively investigating and arresting these individuals. The team is in the process of pursuing the first group of targets from that list.

Mr. DiBiagio said, “The intent of the Violent Crime Impact Team is to pursue those individuals who have been identified by federal and local law enforcement as the most violent criminals in Baltimore – the worst of the worst – and take them off the streets.”

The other cities where the Violent Crime Impact Team program is being implemented are Albuquerque, New Mexico; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Columbus, Ohio; Greensboro, North Carolina; Las Vegas, Nevada; Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Richmond, Virginia; Tampa, Florida; Tucson, Arizona; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Washington, D.C./Northern Virginia. The selection of each city was based on a variety of factors, including the homicide rate, violent crime rate, and the belief that these teams could make a positive impact in these cities.